GOD UNKNOWN

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

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A Study of the Address of
St. Paul at Athens

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

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PREFACE

THIS book interprets the great speech of St. Paul at Athens in terms of the ideas about religion most familiar to college students to-day. Developed from addresses at Columbia and Indiana Universities, it is now offered to that wider company of students, in college and out, whose quest for reality is the sign of the new life that is youth at any age, and the promise of reconstruction after war.

Barnard College, Easter, 1920. C. S. B.

Men of Athens, I regard you as quite too much given to gods, for as I have gone about and surveyed your worships I have found even an altar inscribed TO A GOD UNKNOWN.—
Acts 17 : 22

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I

RELIGION IN THE OPEN

THE recurrence of a religious note in the verse inspired by the war, in many of the stories and essays, and especially in soldiers' letters, is due to a closer contact with reality and expresses an enhanced sense of personality. It seems extraordinary only to the spiritually dull. Those who but the other day said that religion was not talked about, except professionally by propagandists, must have forgotten their youth. Among those for whom life is still an adventure no important subject is talked about more. We may count out, of course, that mere repetition of news which is hardly talk at all. Real talk tends toward religion at the rate by which it becomes an exchange of personality with personality. The young in years are eager for this give and take; and the young in spirit thereby renew their youth. Both do, indeed, abhor cant; for they wish not to accept experience, but to explore it. Both are, indeed, chary of sentimental expression; for they fear lest emotion be diluted. But to assume that religion cannot be

talked about without cant or sentiment is quite blind, and impoverishes personal intercourse.

The ancient world seems to have talked of religion even more freely. Though we are not to assume that the man on the street in Athens conversed after the manner of Plato's *Dialogues,* he seems to have discussed the same topics of life, death, and immortality, and to have discussed them on the street. Otherwise the topical hits of popular comedy—those of Aristophanes, for instance, on Socrates—would have had no point. The historian of the earliest Christian missions records that "all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17: 21). The context shows that the "new thing" they loved to talk about was a new philosophy or a new religion; for he is telling how a learned Christian Jew debated with the Greeks in the public squares of Athens the eternal topic of how to know God.

Though such open-air debate was commoner in Athens than in New York or London, the closing speech of the Christian had so extraordinary a significance that it still stands out in history. In our day of print we have to make an effort of imagination to realize this debate of the first century as an historic battle. When St. Paul stood in the Areopagus at

Athens before the curious and lively Greeks, neither he nor they had in mind books or writings. In his habit of thought and in theirs, books came afterward. What came first was the personal, oral expression of the teacher and the manner of life taught and practised, then the transmission of that teaching through disciples by word of mouth, and only after this the fixing of the message in literary form. All these stages are clear in the records of the teaching of Socrates. We know that teaching the more intimately because the literary form in which it was fixed by Plato suggests the vitality of oral discussion, of urgent questions concerning the deepest things. The same stages appear in the earliest records of Christianity; and stage by stage they reveal the sharp difference, the new and distinctive character, that struck the Athenians as they listened to the missionary of a new religion at the radiant center of ancient philosophy.

Christianity was talked and lived before it was written. Its earliest propaganda was oral. The earliest documents that we have recovered are notes of teaching on the highways, hymns and hymn-like creeds, and letters to communities already Christian. These show a strikingly new attitude in the quest of God; and the canon, or written material later made authoritative, shows an even more striking difference

from any other written vision of life. Platonism may be derived from Plato's writings; and the problems of its interpretation are ultimately literary. So is the ethic of Confucius or the philosophy of Comte. But Christianity is not primarily the writings of the Christ; and its interpretation is not ultimately literary. No one needs to be told that it is to be found in the New Testament; but many people need to be told that the New Testament is not so much its sole source as its chief expression in writing. Before and after this expression is its expression in human life. It was first called a way, that is, a way of life, or a religion. The way was not derived from the New Testament, which had not yet been written. Both the way and the writings proclaimed themselves as derived directly from "the Way, the Truth, and the Life". Both insisted that the word of God is more than a book.

The common term, and the most significant, throughout the early stages of the Christian message is *life*; and the idea is even more frequent. The earliest missionaries insisted repeatedly that the characteristic of their message was not wisdom, but power. This has been taken to mean that they spoke without wisdom, but with warmth, *i. e.,* simply and with feeling. So to translate it is to do violence both

to their words and to the facts. Simplicity is of course necessary in speaking to the unlettered; but it does not prove that the speakers too were unlettered, and no one can maintain that St. Luke or St. Paul or St. John were even unliterary. Any such assumption is refuted on every page of the Acts, the epistle to the Romans, and the fourth gospel. Simplicity is itself a literary achievement, as any one knows who has sought it; and that is the only sense in which the New Testament as a whole is simple. No, what the missionaries said was that their religion had something more than style, something beyond words, the direct influence of God. For Christianity is personal in the extraordinary sense that it proposes to deal with personality directly. All its utterances, oral or written, whether simple in the ordinary sense or not—and some of them are far from simple—assert a directness of communication quite beyond the usual notions of personal influence.

Christianity did, indeed, spread among unlettered people long and widely before it formulated its philosophy or even compiled its history; and this has rightly been urged as one of its claims to attention. But the inference, instead of being merely that it was simple, should be that it must have been extraordinarily direct, and more generally, that it was, and

is, primarily a religion. A philosophy in the wider sense of an animating theory it had always; and this one, at least, of its earliest missionaries, the Paul who flung it into the talk of Athens, was in every sense of the word a philosopher. When he met the philosophers of Greece in the Areopagus he was doubly equipped for battle. He had already debated with the common people on the streets. Now he was facing the more intellectual of that cityful so eager "to tell or to hear some new thing"; and he knew that the time was pregnant. The battle of Jew and Greek, of religion and philosophy, is historic in the full sense that it is perpetual, ever renewed so long as men think with free wills, so permanently human that it has remained in all times contemporary. It is historic also in the more usual sense that it was dramatically public. The attack of St. Paul on Athens had a great stage.

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. And

they took him and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. We would know, therefore, what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things.

"(And) he hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

"Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto silver or stone graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath

given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them." *

The scene kindles imagination as one of the great historic meetings. On the cliff above the St. Lawrence at Quebec stands a plain shaft with this inscription, WOLFE AND MONTCALM. The generous spirit that joined so simply the two who led the armies of the old world fighting in the new has its fulfilment to-day. Montcalm and Wolfe have just fought side by side in France; and the Canadians who first stemmed the invasion of French soil were of British blood. But the monument remains eloquent of more than chivalry. It sums up a long war of colonization and the final clash of political ideals. It marks a turning-point in history. It is a scene in that drama which we must make for ourselves from the historical record if we wish to feel the movement of human life. Imagination has its use in history, not for fanciful decoration, but for realizing, more deeply than we can through abstract generalizations, the human im-

* Acts 17: 16-34.

port. We comprehend history not only by statistics and inference, but by visualizing its dramatic crises.

So generation after generation has dramatized Canossa, with the Emperor shivering in the snow at the barred door of the Pope. For there, as on the Plains of Abraham, imagination grasps in the persons of Henry and Gregory the significance of opposing ideals. Among such dramatizations of history no scene should be more revealing than that in the Areopagus when the apostle to the nations faced the philosophers of Athens. His first words are as full of battle as the traditional name of the place: "oversupplied with religions" . . . "worship without knowing" . . . "him declare I unto you." Though the name Areopagus no longer suggested to the Athenians the antiquated god of war, the place became on that day a battle-ground between Hellenism and Hebraism, between philosophy and religion, between an old art and a new life, between man creating gods and man created and empowered by God.

What were the "objects of devotion" challenged by this stranger? They were the most beautiful temples, the most beautiful statues, of antiquity. Like the Greek masterpieces of literature, like Homer and Sophocles, these Greek masterpieces of architecture and sculpture became the models for the centuries.

Who should say they had no vitality? Above the city thus adorned shone the Acropolis with its great temple and its great statue of the maiden goddess Athene, looking out over the blue Aegean of the poets. The city below was a city of schools, some of them set, like Oxford or Indiana University, in gardens and groves. Becoming more and more a city of commerce, stretching one hand to the Asiatic East and the other to the Roman West, Athens was still a city of learning, a city of thought. Thither resorted for study the youth of the civilized world. Rome herself learned at the feet of Athens. The streets trod by the apostle were trod by Cicero; and both came to it as to a city of ideas, of discussion, of speculation, of intellectual talk. In this aspect its closest modern parallel is a university. To such an audience the unknown Jew cried, "Whom you worship in ignorance I declare." Among such statues of the calm Olympians he held up his crucifix.

"What you reverence without grasping, this I declare. God"— Are these words to the most intellectual city of its time, and from an unknown Jew, fanaticism or effrontery? Do they reveal the man of one idea among the men of many ideas; or are they the oratorical trick of shocking an audience to attention? Neither. The speech is neither fanatical

nor noisy. However else it may be regarded, it will always claim attention as thought. Its depth is of feeling, too; but so much of its consistency as is merely logical may be expressed as a series of propositions about God.

God is a person, not an idea.

He is the personality supremely creative, the life-giver.

He is creative not only in what we call Nature, but in human personality.

His empowering of human personality is completely personal, the complete giving of himself.

As he empowers, so he judges, human experience, calling us to develop our manhood through him.

The hope of humanity is the manhood revealed in the Christ, who is God making himself man to enlarge the bounds of human experience.

These fundamental ideas have as much challenge now as then, because the scene enacted in Athens two thousand years ago has been reënacted whenever any Christian apostle has summoned any Athens. They survive intact the translation of the scene into terms of one's own Athens, one's own environment of thought and life. Translation into terms of contemporary Boston, Oxford, or Chicago will revivify dying words; but it must be safeguarded by expand-

ing only in the direction of the whole trend of thought seen in the speaker's other utterances. Such translation, seeking the thought at once through experience and through literary interpretation, will open the way for exploration.

"While the missionary was waiting for them in Boston on his way to New York, he was cut to the soul to see the city overrun with false religions. So he debated in church with those who had the older religious traditions, and on the Common every day with any one that came along. When the Realists and Pragmatists from Harvard fell in with him, some of them said, 'What is this word-monger trying to say?' and the others replied, 'He is probably a Swami, or a prophet of some other Oriental cult'—this because they heard 'incarnation' and 'resurrection'. But they set him before an open meeting of the Discussion Club with the sarcastic introduction: 'May we know just what this new philosophy that you are talking about so much is? You bring to our attention something—shall we say?—exotic. So we wish to know what it really amounts to.' Bostonians, you know, and also the transient intellectuals who are pursuing Boston culture, enjoy nothing so much as hearing and discussing religious novelties.

"Then the missionary rose and said:

"'Ladies and gentlemen of Boston, the thing that strikes me most here is the insatiable appetite for religion. After I had reviewed, as I thought, the whole list of your various worships, I found one more expressed in an altar with this inscription, To God Unknown. Now my doctrine is simply the definite proclamation of him whom you do not know.

"'God, if you conceive him as creative, as the maker of the world, or rather of the universe, has not come to live with men in the sense that men brought him down by realizing him in their own images, in the sense that he is limited and divided by our various subjective conceptions. Worship, therefore, cannot rightly be the projection of our own imaginations; for that makes God depend on us.

"'No, it is of the very essence of God that he gives, that he is the life-giver, the maker of men and of nations, diversifying individual and ethnic life from the common human stock. The common human impulse to seek God moves as if we were fumbling after and trying to find him who cannot be far from any one of us, since in him we live and move and are. Your own best poets have said in various ways that we are his offspring.

"'But since we are the offspring of God, we may not permit ourselves to worship our own images of

God, however beautiful the embodiment of these human conceptions, as if the images were divine. What is really divine can be known; for it has been fully revealed. In those times and places, indeed, when men could not grasp fully, God has responded to such imperfect worship, such gropings, as yours; but those times are not these, and those earlier seekers after God are not you. Your worship may no longer content itself with the empty beauty of outworn imaginations, nor your theology with those philosophical speculations which remain abstract because they balk at moral issues. Morality may be the long story of human behavior; but righteousness is divine. The hope of righteousness in the world is that the Creator is the judge.

" 'God has come to dwell with men in the only way satisfying to the soul, not through our embodying his divinity, but through his embodying our humanity. We need not imagine him; for we can receive him, since he gives himself. This is the final meaning of God as the life-giver. His final revelation is personal; for our final need is the empowering of personality. He has given us, not a larger philosophy nor a higher imaginative conception, but himself. The personal influence of God is not limited by our philosophic or imaginative grasp; it is not our ideas

or imaginations; it is personality working directly on personality. Jesus is not another great man; he is God made man. To receive him is not to accept another philosophy or another example; it is to receive God. The eternal life that has been the dream of every great soul and the blind hope of even the smallest has been given completely and really, not partially and symbolically, by being given in the person of the Son of God. Thus the rising of the Son of God from the dead is not the survival of a man, nor the withdrawal of God after a revelation of himself on earth; it is the proof of the empowering of mankind with eternal life. And the only real worship is the worship of God really present to empower us.'

"When they heard 'rising from the dead', some openly jeered. Others said, 'We should like to hear you discuss that further.' So the missionary left them, since with him discussion was a means, not an end. But some of them—a judge of an old Cambridge family and several others, including one woman—hung upon him until they received the faith."

II

GREEK AND JEW

THE most obvious contrast in the dramatic scene is that between Greek and Jew. In one of his most interesting essays, *Hebraism and Hellenism,* Matthew Arnold reminds us that the Greek spirit and habit are pleasanter to live with. He does not go so far as to assert that Hellenism is better to live by; and all his praise, however warmly seconded by our own, leaves that doubt. Savonarola must have been very unpleasant in Florence. To read Langland may be very disturbing after the serenity of Chaucer. When we try to be Greeks, the Jews disturb us deliberately. When we talk of art, they talk of morality; when we seek to enrich life, they insist on religion. What has religion to do with life? That is the essential question; and no one has answered it more squarely than the missionary in the Areopagus.

We need not pause over those bastard modern Hellenisms which have from time to time masked loose thought and base living. The apostle knew the real Hellenism—none better. He quotes its poetry;

he shows his grasp of its philosophy; and if he calls its art idols, that is because he is considering it philosophically, as Plato sometimes considers poetry, in the single aspect of its expression of the divine, not because he is a bigot. The word *idol,* for him and for his hearers, had none of our associations with savages. Nor was he limited for his knowledge of Hellenism to his Greek reading. He knew Greek life. He judged Greek thought by its fruit of manhood and womanhood. We are disconcerted sometimes by a strange moral lack even in Plato, and reflect that even Socrates did not suffice for Alcibiades; but the apostle knew the perverted life of Corinth. The two epistles to the Corinthians expose in Hellenism an organic weakness, an unsoundness of moral fiber. Even Athens, with all her wealth of tradition, could no longer fortify the Greek soul. It is for manhood that he contends with the Greeks in the sight of their immortal gods.

As the Athens of that day still stood for the real Hellenism, nobler than perfumed modern imitations, so the unknown Jew stood for the full Hebraism, for the hope of Israel as the hope of the world. His longest and most highly reasoned work, the epistle to the Romans, is a philosophy of history. It unfolds the function of a great race in the universally human

quest. He was intensely conscious of the destiny of race in the development of humanity. This, and not a vague sentiment of brotherhood, animates the oft-quoted passage: "He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, limiting their appointed 'days' and the bounds of their dwelling." We can feel its significance keenly to-day by thinking of Russia, more than once subjugated as Judea was then, indignant at alien violation, groping for its destiny, holding in uncertain hands so much of the fate of the world.

Such a thinker did not undervalue the Greek function of order in thought and beauty in expression. He does not rule it out; he seeks to lead it on, as he seeks to lead on the Jewish tradition, to fulfilment. He would not reconcile the two by compromise; he feels the full clash; but he is sure of God, who inspires and shall empower both toward the realization of a larger humanity. Hellenism and Hebraism are not logically contradictory; but they cannot be united by merely mechanical combination, still less by oscillating between the two. When duty has not seen beauty, we have intolerance and fanaticism; but when beauty has forgotten duty, even Athens is lapsing to decay, and the Rome of later centuries, or the New York of to-day, produces Cellinis and Borgias.

If we resent the crucifix among the splendid gods, the warfare of duty on beauty, we are in need of more than a reconciling formula, a philosophic allotment to this and to that; we need personal unity. It is not the Jew who divides our lives; it is the Greek—for lack of hold on the divine as organically unifying. The more Athenian I am, the more I worship architecture and sculpture and painting and music and literature and drama and philosophy, the more I feel the distraction of warring claims and the need of a single development of the whole personality. For surely I should add sociology and politics—and religion? Since there is doubtless something or somebody in what survives or is rediscovered as religion, I will keep space enough for an altar To God Unknown. But can religion be a part of life? Must it not be all or nothing? Those who say that they have not felt the need of religion are thinking of religion as a refuge and solace from facts, or as an aspiration beyond facts. But if it is rather obedience to truth, it cannot be a part, much less a negligible part; and if it is the response of man to God, then it may engage the whole personality and give to life an integrating power.

So the apostle seeks to reunite a life already divided, to make life single by turning it from many

gods to the one God. There is no real or abiding beauty apart from truth. Life, to be at once true and beautiful, must be centered; it becomes ugly and false by being dissipated in many worships. This is the meaning of those first challenging words. "Too religious?" thinks the Athenian, ancient or modern. "Most preachers have complained that I am not religious enough." But if he analyzes his life, he will admit that its central weakness is too many worships. God is one, says the Jew to the Greek. Truth is one; and it is the source of beauty. Have you not learned from Aristotle that all so-called virtues are from one source, radiating from one vitalizing and informing virtue? Duty is one, behind and beneath all duties. There is one great *ought,* central and animating, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Thereby shalt thou know how to love thy neighbor and to harmonize art with sociology. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God", and ye shall open your hearts to all expressions of manhood. For life is one.

III

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

THE Jew tells the Greeks that they must make up their minds about God. He will not let them leave the question of God open by erecting a provisional and empty altar to God Unknown. If they have outgrown earlier conceptions, these must no longer be cherished merely because the expression of them was beautiful. Life cannot fall back on art; art must express life, or it will weaken and betray. Life demands a real knowledge of God. You must not only seek him, he says, but find him. He is unknown? Then you must know him; for, since he is God, you must obey him. The hour strikes here in Areopagus.

Greek philosophy preferred to leave the question of God open. But some of its latest speculations were its most beautiful because they came nearest to conclusion and maintained an attitude of expectancy. Socrates as he is dramatized for us in the dialogues of Plato, and Plato himself, as he ranges beyond his master, look for God. The noblest and most thrilling

of the Platonic dialogues are more than speculations on immortality; they are aspirations and counsels toward laying hold of the divine life. Such thinking the apostle in the Areopagus does not for a moment disparage. He wishes only to carry it forward. To the question put so humanly he brings the divine answer: "He that seeketh shall find."

Neither Plato nor any other philosopher gives a moment's tolerance to the cant saying, "It makes no difference what you believe, so long as you do right." Imagine anyone venturing to say that to Socrates! Common as it is, it has no meaning. It expresses the lazy living that comes from lack of thought. For we can do only what we believe. The apostle's insistence on right belief is the insistence of every philosopher, not necessarily on a code, but on a principle of life. Not only may we attain, he says, the knowledge that shall guide our lives, but we must. That cannot remain an open question.

So the apostle, while he shows full appreciation of all philosophy that is really seeking, rebukes sharply merely philosophizing, the popular use of philosophy for intellectual pastime and display. "All the Athenians," says his companion and historian, "and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."

It is a description of every Athens; it exposes the danger of every intellectual society, the danger of talk for the sake of talking and for the postponement of action. Hardened into habit, he says elsewhere,* such talk is no better than the flightiness of "silly women, following various impulses, always learning and never able to arrive at knowledge of the truth." This is what the man in the street means by asking, "What's the use of philosophy? it doesn't get you anywhere." The saying is rude; but the objection is real. Though it uses the word philosophy in a perverted sense, the word would not bear that sense if philosophy had not been abused for centuries by those intellectuals who have no desire to get, or to be got, anywhere. Too many Athenians, ancient and modern, have developed what Matthew Arnold calls "openness of mind, quickness and flexibility of intelligence", at the expense of intellectual energy and honesty. Instead of becoming producers, such men are content to remain gymnasts. Areopagus needs a missionary. Philosophy becomes sterile by losing touch with life.

To keep the mind open may be a habit actively and constructively scientific, or it may be the veriest idleness. The Athenian tolerance of religions—and our

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* 2 Tim. 3: 6.

own tolerance—may be no more than unwillingness to commit oneself. Free discussion of any religion may mean that the discussers wish to have no religion. Let us consider how differently men have sought God, lest we ourselves should be compelled to find him. But is there not more likeness than difference; and is not the significant fact that they all sought—except you? Let us contemplate the divisions of Christendom to assure ourselves that there is no Christianity. But is not the significant fact the vital persistence in spite of so much division and perversion; and will you seek to reduce the variations to a least common denominator, or rule them all out alike, because you are afraid to choose?

The missionary in the Areopagus is not tolerant in the sense of being indifferent. He is for making contrasts and oppositions, and above all for arriving, for thinking through to an available conclusion. He admits that the finding of God is indirect, meditative, and poetic; but he insists that it is also direct, practicable, and determinate. "He hath determined the times and the bounds, if haply they might find him, though he be not far." Is not philosophy, then, a journey rather than an arrival? To the question of God there are only answers, not the answer. This missionary insists on the answer that shall integrate

all true answers. He insists; that is the annoying habit of missionaries. I am not satisfied with my gods; I am quite willing to consider any others; I have publicly proclaimed my openness of mind by a provisional altar. I am not ready to commit myself. Why may I not remain free?

"Certain there be," says Bacon at the opening of his essay on Truth, "that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief, affecting free will in thinking as well as in acting." It is a grim saying of a great intellect. There is a philosopher's scorn in that word *affecting*. It brushes away the talkers from the field of real search. To be real, the seeking must be bent on finding, not content with the search itself. The search for God needs more than debate and speculation, more even than research; for it is a life adventure, like the search for the Northwest Passage. It is the working out of that persistent human desire in which all races of men are of one blood.

This universal human desire is not satisfied by philosophy. Not only philosophizing, but philosophy in its true sense, may stop short of God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" is the question of a poet who is most clearly a philosopher. It discerns in human thinking not so much a defect as a limit. Agnosticism is the name given in the last generation

to a philosophy that doubts the intellectual possibility of thinking through to God; and the name contains the very word *unknown* that the apostle found inscribed on that Greek altar. Agnosticism may, indeed, be lazy; but it may be humble and honest. What right, then, has the apostle to say that it must be temporary? Can we force our thinking through to God? No, the finding on which he insists he presents as more than a logical conclusion. While he bids the Athenians use their reasoning productively, not gymnastically, he tells them that the finding of God is guided by God directly. To know God is more than to reason out a philosophy of life; it is to reach out with the whole personality for a person ever responsive. Nor is it the achievement of the few who are philosophers; it is the hope of mankind. Most men and women are quite unprepared to reach God by thinking steadily and thinking through; they are not therefore condemned to live without him. For "he is not far from any one of us."

The human desire for God, because it is human, is emotional. There was once a philosophy which divided feeling from reason almost as if each inhabited separately and exclusively its own lobe of the brain. That division is not tolerated by modern psychology, and it was never tolerated by Christianity. We are

not so crudely twofold. The terms feeling and reason are useful only as expressing different directions of the single personality. It is plain that both enter into what we call will, which is the common name for the personality expressing itself in decision and action. We habitually, and as we say instinctively, distrust either without the other. We distrust reason by itself, and we do not usually obey it; we distrust feeling by itself, and, though we obey it oftener, indeed too often, we are wont to explain such decisions in terms of reason. An instant decision is not necessarily invalid. It may be the response of the whole previous habit of life, the spontaneous reaction of the whole personality, and therefore larger than the reasons that we can immediately formulate. It may be all the sounder for embracing feeling as well as reason; for feeling is part of experience. None the less we do well to test it by reasoning it out; for the chief practical use of reasoning is to analyze. Feeling, in most men, is more constructive, and living is larger than reasoning; but that does not dispense anyone from reasoning as far as he can, nor permit feeling to be unreasonable. In short, feeling and reason are complementary. Instead of regarding one as superior to the other, instead of pretending that we usually act from either "pure reason" or "pure

feeling", we ought to realize that logical progress without emotional progress may be illusory, and that feeling, as well as reason, needs to be educated. For education has little meaning except as the development of the whole personality.

The speech in the Areopagus appeals fully by offering a satisfaction at once logical and emotional, a progress of both thinking and feeling in the integrating development of manhood. What the rhetoricians call appeal to feeling is most obvious in the opening challenge and in the reference to Greek poetry. We may read between the lines of the summary report that the apostle appealed to feeling all through the speech, that the appeal to feeling, as in most real oratory, was pervasive; but certainly he appeals none the less to reason. For the speech has a close consecutiveness of ideas from the point that God is the creator, through the point that he is therefore continuously the empowerer, to the point that he is the liberator of human life. But its consistency is more than logical. It seeks singly to animate the whole personality. While it gives argument it gives vision.

So each hearer of the message attains the vision of God not by logic alone nor by emotion alone, but by a total apprehension through all the ways of his ex

perience. So also this satisfaction of the whole personality is not merely in philosophy, but in religion. A man's religion has more or less philosophy according to his intellectual bent and training; but in any case it is more than his philosophy, which is at most his religion formulated. The message from the Areopagus is that religion is not merely the various quests of man for God; it is God's response. "He that seeketh shall find" because God gives himself. To know God is not merely to expand one's theory of knowledge. Faith, which is the vision of human life fulfilled, discovers not only "that he is", but "that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We are not to lay aside thinking; we are to think not less, but more; we must not shirk; we must not remain agnostics. But we are to remember that the goal is neither a beautiful symbol nor a working hypothesis. Philosophy attains a reasoned view of truth. That is not the whole answer to the questing soul. The answer, says the apostle, is not simply my arrival at a goal of thought, my interpretation of experience; it is an enlargement of my personality by the answering touch of the supreme personality. As our inmost desire is for more than a principle, so the only adequate answer is God himself.

That is why the conclusion of the Areopagus ad-

dress contains the word most irritating to all Athenians, the word *repent.* Not only by Greek philosophy, but by most other philosophy, repentance is ignored or even rejected. This is the more remarkable since it is generally accepted by unphilosophic mankind as natural and even welcome. It is what I might expect God to say if he answered my whole desire. The word is religious. It almost sums up the important fact that religion answers far more people than can ever comprehend the answers of philosophy. To repent is to prepare oneself for God. It expresses the human experience that to find God is at once larger and more common than to think out a theory of the divine. Men have always found it natural, since the attainment is more than intellectual, that the quest itself should be emotional and moral. Else it would not be the quest of one's whole manhood. And the apostle adds that the response is as large as the desire. To find God is not only to attain, but to receive. It is love answered by love.

Love always makes us conscious of our defects and eager to make them good. Without that strong desire to give and to receive personally we may remain complacent, and even resent reminders of our shortcomings; but our content with morality good enough for the crowd is at once disturbed by the desire for a

large and deep personal relation. "I am not good enough for him. I will be better, more worthy of his friendship. I will prepare myself for real communion." Every strong personal influence includes this moral awakening of friends, and gives a clue to God's awakening of manhood. Sin is a term now unfashionable. "Miserable sinners" suggests to many people, confident of keeping themselves out of jail, the merest cant. "We are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable." Intolerable! On the contrary, I bear it with perfect ease, and am often able to forget it entirely. Why will Christianity still try to put into my mouth phrases so antiquated and exaggerated? Because that prayer is part of the preparation for the presence of God. Until I set out really to approach him, I am but dimly conscious of my untruth, my flinchings and perversions. They are revealed by the thought of him. "In thy light shall we see light." Sin is revealed as untruth to his vision of me and as the bar between us. In order to commune with him, I will try to be my real self.

So repentance is the Christian enlargement of the philosopher's "Know thyself". To know oneself is rightly made by philosophy a condition of knowing

God. It is a necessary road for honest thought. But it demands more than psychological analysis, and it thrives on the purpose to know God. To reach out for what I can be helps me to realize what I am; and to realize what I am opens the intercourse which shall make me what I can be. Sin is what I do when I am untrue to myself. It is the perversion and interruption of my personality. That I see in the light of the divine personality. I wish to lay hold of God in order to become more and more myself. To find God includes finding myself. To find myself demands more than the formulation of my philosophy; it demands the realization of my religion. The goal of my life is more than formula, more than a principle of living. Righteousness, or personal efficiency, is achieved through obedience to a response made to my whole self. The apostle who preached repentance even to Greek philosophy put it into a great sentence a few years later before a Roman court. The sentence sums up for every age that answer of the human to the divine which is the essence of religion. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." *

* Acts 26: 19.

IV

PERSONALITY

THUS the personal language of the Areopagus address, however much it may have shocked the Athenians as unphilosophic, is essential. Not the divine, but God; not seekers for truth, but offspring of God; and in general not *it,* but *him*; such terms might seem a new sort of poetizing. But the Athenian intelligence was quick to perceive that they implied a direct answer to the real human question, What has God to do with me? Indeed, the posing of the question in such terms must itself contribute to the answer if the question be really concerning personality. Is it not? Is not the eternally human concern with philosophy to learn how to enrich and empower human life? I seek experience and I think it out in order to become more intensely and largely myself. If I listen to poetry, if I hope that the quest of the Holy Grail may be more than a dream, my hope is not merely of respite from life, nor even of the inspiration of a truth larger than logic; it is of some more direct development of my manhood.

In the beautiful poem that we all read at school, *The Vision of Sir Launfal,* Lowell's knight returns from the quest of the Holy Grail disheartened. He has sought in vain. He feels that the Grail must be, as Tennyson's Arthur saw, one of the "wandering fires". Then at home again, at his own gate sharing his pilgrim's crust with the beggar to whom on setting out he had carelessly flung alms, he is illuminated. He grasps emotionally that great saying, "Whoso shall receive one such little child . . . receiveth me." Lowell even formulates his conclusion:

> Who gives himself with his gift feeds three—
> Himself, his hungering brother, and Me.

Here is the insight of poetry. "Who gives himself" expresses the final desire of every generous soul. What we are trying to do in every work that we love is to give ourselves. All oratory, all teaching, is in its degree the giving of the speaker with the word. And what is love? Every gift of my friend, every word of his to me, is but the sign of the real gift of himself. We all wish to believe that to give ourselves not only enhances the material gift, but makes it abound, that the widow's mite is indeed worth more than its face value—nay, that the only real gift is the gift of oneself, the imparting of one's personality.

Should God, then, give only gifts, not the great gift? Cannot God give himself? Should not the giving of the supreme personality be perfectly personal? What should be the personal influence of God? Can it be limited by those material means which we ourselves find inadequate, by those words through which the imparting of ourselves is even at best imperfect? Is the love of God only an idea of mine? To these questions Lowell's answer is very sad. We cannot find the Holy Grail except in our fellow men. We can give to God by giving ourselves to them; but God cannot give himself to us. Here poetry reveals in a flash the bounds of much contemporary religious thought. Religion, we have often been told, has learned to turn from other-worldliness to the human cry of our brothers. It has been socialized. It has come out of the churches into the streets. It has turned from prayer to sociology, from worship to education, from saving souls to saving babies. To such work we are to give not only our money, but ourselves. "Who gives himself with his gift feeds three"; but the question still burns in our hearts, Who shall feed the giver? I can give no more than I am; and in the face of the human need what am I?

"Si jeunesse savait; si vieillesse pouvait." The

wistful French line echoes a dissonance, now pathetic, now tragic, in Greek poetry and philosophy, yes, in all literature. If youth but knew in time; if age, which knows, could do! Alas! we have no more than begun before we lose bit by bit the force to carry on. The mightiest feel their work slipping away. Old Charlemagne's last building days are shadowed by the apparition of a pirate ship. Napoleon returns, but not to his first power. The real Barbarossa and the mystic Arthur alike return—in dreams. It is a commonplace; but every ardent soul learns it afresh through the hand laid on his own heart; and humanity would die of despair but for the certitude of youth that the flow and ebb of the physical tide is not the formula of life. Youth believes in immortal life; Christianity offers eternal life. Eternal life is proclaimed not as the survival of the physical struggle, not as extension but as expansion, not as prolongation but as growth, as the ripening of power with knowledge in the development of human personality by personal contact with God.

The language of the Areopagus speech is personal because its message is life from life, personal life from personal life, eternal life from eternal life. That message may be read in its earliest and simplest written terms as the two letters to the Thessalonians.

Most frequently it is iterated by early Christianity in the phrase "sons of God"; but in other phrases also it pervades the New Testament. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." The language of gospels and epistles, of the utterly simple letters to the Thessalonians and the cogent essay to the Romans, of the practical wisdom of St. James and the poetry of St. John, is consistently biological. This is even commoner in direct statement than in parable. The sower is a parable, and "the seed is the word of God"; but "the word *was* God". "How can a man be born again?" cried the questing rabbi; but the answer was a reiteration, "so is every one that is born of the spirit". "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" jeered the materialists; and the answer bated no jot: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." No version of the Holy Grail, not the most highly imaginative, is more concrete.

If we say that these are figures of speech, our inquiry is not advanced. Figures of what? For what do the figures stand, for dreams or for revelation, for human longing or also for divine response, for an aspiration or for a gift—and what gift? We talk of religion too much in figures, clouding or postponing thought; and we have no right to live by dreams. To

seek the end of the rainbow is a pastime hardly tolerable even for children. Let a man set himself to read the opening of the fourth gospel afresh, trying to put away prejudice and other conventional bars, setting himself to scrutinize the intention of the words themselves as if he had never seen them before. Is it Platonism? Never mind; we are not seeking a label. It is poetry; yea, verily, and philosophy too, and therefore is the more likely to be truth. But what does it mean? Such reading cannot but reflect that the passage "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" speaks the characteristic language of Christianity, cannot but dwell on that expression which is most characteristic, not "as many as received *it*", his doctrine, his philosophy, his example, but "as many as received *him*". For the New Testament, with all that we can elsewhere gather of the Christian worship and life that it represents, makes Christianity the receiving of the Christ.

The assumption that we can receive the Christ only as we receive Plato denies both a persistent human aspiration and the plain meaning of the New Testament. It simply rules out the universally human inquiry. What is it for me to know God? If instead of starting with an assumption, we try to explore the meaning of the New Testament as we try to explore

the meaning of Dante or Kant, seeking the intention before drawing our inferences, we shall read some startling things concerning personality. For thus we should measure, not ruling them out as figurative, those terms of biology. What is probably the earliest book of the canon is addressed "to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ". No more mystic language can be found in the latest. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples." So? Not, then, primarily by subscribing or embracing or defending or following, but by living as branches of a vine. Certainly this is a figure, a figure of organic life; but what does it mean concerning human life?

We have at last become thoroughly aware of a defect in old measures of efficiency. Brunetière's *La banqueroute de la science* rebuked the complacent looseness of our talk of progress a generation before the practise of a false doctrine of efficiency finally goaded the world to arms. Meantime the profession of the engineer has been gradually enriched and expanded in proportion as it has learned to measure and to promote efficiency humanly. The complicated and menacing problems of employment are at least summed up, though not yet solved, in the phrase human efficiency. For in spite of all our machinery

and all our computations in "units" we have learned that not only administrative efficiency, but labor efficiency, is the efficiency of persons. Appalled by our frightful human waste, we have set about the conservation of human energy. The waste of misdirection inspired a wide extension of vocational training. Real progress may be read in our laws restricting child labor, in our preventive medicine and surgery, in our trade schools, in all the scientific philanthropy that seeks to save and develop persons.

But there is in human efficiency something beyond law and surgery, beyond technical skill and eugenics. Its imperfections cannot always be set down to bad food or bad eyes, bad schools or bad parents; and its improvement is not always accomplished by a prescription of soup, gymnasium, and evening classes. The sum of physical capacity and technical skill may be greater or less than the total human efficiency; it does not measure a man's effective power in society. The searchings of war have reminded us that human efficiency, operative, executive, administrative, and above all initiative, is in the last analysis moral. Scientific philanthropy has something to learn from the Salvation Army. Those who are offended at the cant use of the word salvation may get a fresh and true conception by pondering what is meant in arid

or impoverished districts by the salvation of land. It is commonly called redemption; and it consists in revivifying latent or spent forces by feeding them with new force; it is life awakening and liberating life. While we were studying and classifying juvenile delinquency, and finding laws, reformatories, psychiatry, and settlements inadequate, William George had the inspiration to cultivate moral responsibility by trust. Judge Lindsey revolutionized criminal procedure by making children's courts deal personally with the boy himself. The "Big Brother" movement, sentimental in name, amateur and almost impromptu in origin, leaped to success because, whatever its specific prescription of food or schooling or camp, its method was singly and constantly the fortifying of moral fiber through personal contacts.

Human efficiency is expressed by Christianity in personal terms as being personal in this sense. It is measured by Christianity, not in man-hours, not as labor skilled or unskilled, but as life; and as life it is to be guarded and promoted. Herein lies the suggestiveness of the habitually biological language. The human product is not square yards, barrels, or books; it is fruit. The figure connotes more than soil and seed; it means growth. Laborers by the hour or

the piece, students preoccupied with courses and "points", should look through what they are making, acquiring, or passing to what they are growing. Fruit as a term of growth implies that human production, as in the figure of the seed or of the vine, may be organic. It is not synonymous with the ordinary sense of accomplishment. Both the process and the progress that it suggests are vital, the working out from within of life that shall feed and reproduce. The fruit bears the seed.

The effort of organic life is toward reproduction. Plant side by side in the laboratory two equal grains of corn. Give one its due supply of moisture and of plant foods while you starve the other. When the second has all but ceased its struggle to grow, feed it as you have fed the thriving first. What will the starveling do? How will it direct its organic effort? Will it first spread forth leaves to catch the sun? Will it first insure its own health and stature? No, lest it should die too soon, it will first focus its vitality on producing fruit. It will bear, however stunted, ears of corn. Human life, in the Christian figure of fruit, is to receive, nourish, and transmit life. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit", means that God, as the creative source of life, brings forth the human harvest from men for men

by empowering men. "So shall ye be my disciples"; not merely by imitating my example, nor by accepting my words, but by receiving my life to develop your own. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God". In that fully personal sense "we are his offspring".

"As many as received him" implies also that personality is worth developing even when it cannot be discerned as exceptional, when it seems quite ordinary human nature. The idea is very democratic; it is exactly opposite to that of the cultivation of the superman at the expense of his fellows. It is the hope, not of egoists and tyrants, but of the world. Assertiveness is specifically rebuked by the divine paradox, "He that saveth his life shall lose it." My personality is to be developed not that I may have more, but that I may give more. Indeed, I expand by giving, as the plant yields. None the less, rather more and more, that which is developed is myself. Those who fear lest Christianity should violate their personalities discern a truth, but not the whole truth. Christianity does, indeed, thwart many desires, inhibit many ambitions, make a law of sacrifice; but sacrifice of what? Of getting and having to being and giving. Which counts more in the development of humanity? What do we mean and desire by per-

sonal development? Christianity says that we should desire much fruit.

Those who have imagined the Holy Grail out of passionate desire to receive God have sought not only a heavenly vision, but the heavenly food. They have desired the power to do through the power to be. "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God", is more than the rapture of an initiate; it is the echo of a great human cry. The message from the Areopagus is that the cry is answered, that to "feel after him and find him" has its complement in "he is not far", that God so loves the world as to give himself. "Offspring of God" had become to the Greeks stale in speech and in art. The apostle seeks to revive the empty symbol by giving to it the personal meaning of "sons of God". Personality is implicit in revelation; the Old Testament and the New are a progressive revelation of the divine empowering of human life; what the apostle urges as the final revelation is completely personal, the man who is God.

The Christian incarnation is not God as embodied by man; it is God embodying man. It differs essentially from other incarnations, which are conceived as a temporary sharing of human experience, by being final and permanent. God has not only visited us; he abides with us and forever shares our human

nature. It is sharply distinct from divine immanence, the idea of God diffused through the universe. Emmanuel, God with us, has always meant to the Jew more than this; and to the Christian it means still more. It means a presence completely personal. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Therefore to know God is to approach nearer and nearer to the Son of God. Christianity constantly urges this as the only way because the word is God. To know God fully is to know him personally; to know him personally is to receive his personality; to receive his personality is to receive the Son of God who is fully Son of Man.

V

SYMBOL AND REALITY

WHAT does Christianity mean by "receiving the Son of God"? The apostle in the Areopagus proclaims Christianity to the Athenians as the final answer to the universal human question, What is it to know God? And indeed Christianity is distinctive only in so far as it offers a more direct energizing of human personality by the divine personality. That God is approached in many ways and speaks through many voices the Christian missionary not only admits, but emphasizes. His point, none the less, is that the Son of God has taken our humanity in order to give us, not one more approach to God, but *the* approach; not a larger conception, but *the* contact, final because completely personal. Christianity proposes that we shall receive power to become sons of God by receiving the Son of God. It presents his incarnation as in some way extended to "all men everywhere". The Christian way can be *the* way of bringing men to God and God to men only in so far as it extends the incarnation, only in so far as its great

commission, "Do this" and "Go ye", is so exercised as to give men the Christ. The old East, long dreaming of incarnations, followed a new star and crossed the desert to worship at a manger. The magi "rejoiced with exceeding great joy"—at one more incarnation, as in the sacred child of Thibet? No, says the apostle to the philosophers, at *the* incarnation; not at another vision of God visiting men, but at the final realization of manhood assumed and empowered by God.

What, then, does a Christian mean by receiving the Christ? More than one thing, doubtless, as through the ages men have meant more than one thing by knowing God; but what essentially, what as the common Christian conception? What in the Christian experience of life is essentially Christian? Let a Christian answer from a crisis that searches his life; let the man be neither a theologian nor an ecclesiastic, but a soldier; and let him answer in action or habit rather than in formula. An American soldier in France wrote to his parents:

> "We are going up to an attack in a short time, and I am going to leave this note to be sent to you in case, by God's will, this is to be my final work. I have made my Communion, and go with a light heart, and a determination to do all that I possibly

can to help in this fight against evil, for God and humanity. I do not think of death or expect it, but I am not afraid of it, and will give my life gladly if it is asked." *

These last words of Edwin Abbey were found in his soldier's kit after his death in that attack on April 10, 1917. Thousands of young soldiers in this war have felt, and hundreds have expressed, the same singleness of devotion. They have said, "I will give my life gladly", knowing, as they had never known before, that this gift is worth even more than it costs because it is *the* gift. "Greater love hath no man than this" not only because it costs most, but because it counts most. To give oneself utterly is to give oneself effectively. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall save it."

Why should he add "I have made my Communion"? Is it filial remembrance of his parents' pious habits, inserted to comfort them with his observance of their ways? His letters show him too sincere for that; and they mention religion elsewhere as naturally as they mention the landscape, or the courtesy of his French peasant hostess. They are all of a piece. Why should such a man before his "final work" make a point of a particular religious symbol?

* *Atlantic Monthly*, volume 121. page 469 (April 1918).

Because it is more than a symbol; because he knew "Communion" as a reality; because he was certain that he should give his life for men more effectively by receiving the Savior of mankind. To demonstrate this in his case and in others would be easy, but beside the point. The inquiry is larger; it opens Christianity as a history. Why is the Eucharist, to use the term common to East and West, the central rite of the historic Church? The answer is largest where it is simplest and most direct. "Then received they their Savior" is the traditional way of expressing the Communion as the personal contact of man with God. Again and again, through centuries, men facing death with life, giving their lives with full Christian consciousness, have desired to give in union with the life once and forever given. Again and again, through centuries divided by war, but united by a corporate Christian feeling, these are the common words, at Tours or at Vienna, in history or in poetry, and on both sides at Agincourt—"then received they their Savior". Edwin Abbey is simply the Christian soldier once more. When such men have gathered up their lives and offered them for that new earth in which dwelleth righteousness, they desire at the summoning hour what they desired at every summoning hour of their lives—more than clear as-

piration of their own, more than the heartening words of their fellow men, however strong or holy, more than the divine words of poetry or revelation, more than any words or thoughts whatever. They want God.

Does not society want the same thing of the Christian Church? Socially Christianity is the ministry of the Christ by men to men. The distinctive function of the Church in the community has been historically the communication of the life of the incarnate Son of God. Whatever else the Church has been, whatever its variations of place and time, its popularity or persecution, its progress, perversion, or confusion, this is its characteristic function and the constant in its corporate consciousness. The two great words with which it was sent forth, a handful of obscure men from a corner of the Roman Empire, to save the world are "Do this" and "Go ye, preach, baptize". Its history may be comprehended as the development of this ministry. Have not its wanderings been deviations from this; its disintegrations for lack of this integration? The strong and wise have bowed not to its human preaching, but to its divine presence; the weak and ignorant have turned away when they found its altars empty. The history of Christianity is the history of its sacraments.

For men and women have gone to church to meet God. No other motive has been generally and permanently sufficient. They need not go to think about God or to realize God; that they may achieve in the forest or by the sea. They may go to meet one another, to feel spiritual companionship, to be inspired by preaching, to pray in a religious atmosphere; but these motives are not essential and have not been generally compelling. The Church in any form is, indeed, social; that is implied in the word itself. Any conception of a church implies a social group. But the Christian Church as its character appears in history is social in a larger and different sense. It is social not because men propose to help one another, but because God proposes to redeem society. Its common life is not gathered from within and from around; it comes from above.

So, using here also its typically biological language, the Christian Church has called itself an organism, the body of Christ. The New Testament oftener assumes or implies the Church than describes or explains it. It was the fact of Christianity most familiar to the men and women to whom the earliest Christian writings were primarily addressed, and the instrument by which Christianity was made known to the world. All the more strikingly, therefore, the

direct references of the New Testament to the Church, as well as the implications and allusions, agree in presenting it as a social organism ordained by God to regenerate human society organically by ministering the divine life. The Church called men to turn to God present and living. It baptized them not merely to mark their renunciation of errors and their apprehension of truth, but to wash away their sins and make them children of God. It made its central rite, "the breaking of bread and the prayers", not merely a reminder of God's love, a communion with one another, and an imaginative realization of the Christ's presence, but the answer of praise and prayer to his actual presence and the reception of him in the bread and wine imparting himself.

This is why the apostle in the Areopagus focuses righteousness, or personal efficiency, in the "man whom God ordained and raised from among the dead". For the incarnation of the Son of God, his embodying of human nature, becomes operative not by being apprehended as an idea, but by being appropriated as life; and the ministry of the Christian Church is the ministry of this life. Therefore the Christian apostles did more than proclaim the incarnation and the resurrection; they ministered to men the incarnate living Lord. The earliest recorded

facts of Christianity after Pentecost are Baptism and the Eucharist. Both are alike inexplicable on any theory of propaganda for the extension of either ideas or example. They propose a new personal birth and a new personal life, both to be imparted, not by preaching and acceptance, but by direct personal contact. In the earliest of the epistles formulating specific doctrine and practise the apostle of the Areopagus declares to the Corinthians: * "My word and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in showing forth of spirit and power, that your faith may be not in men's wisdom, but in God's power". More specifically he devotes a whole section of this epistle to setting forth with great care the proper observance of the Eucharist, quoting the very words of its institution. Those words were afterward incorporated in the gospels as history; but meantime they had been incorporated in the central rite of Christianity as worship and communion. The apostle's care is evidently not to correct a record, but to insure the rite. Why? "That your faith may be not in men's wisdom, but in God's power."

That the words instituting the Eucharist have been, and are, explained otherwise is also part of the history of Christianity. "How can this man give us his

* 1 Cor. 2: 4.

flesh to eat?" has been asked again and again. But it has never expressed the real question of the soul praying that God may not remain unknown. That question is less *how* he gives himself than *whether* he gives himself, less of the manner than of the fact. "*How* are the dead raised?" This apostle repeats that question too as typical; but his answer, so eloquent in the burial service, strikes through it to a larger inquiry. Perhaps he remembered these Athenians, who "mocked when they heard of the resurrection". Perhaps he suggests that the *how* is beside the point or beyond explanation. But certainly the answer is of a deeper question than that of the manner of immortality; it asserts the expansion of life from life. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." * The dead are raised organically, as seed is raised when the germ bursts its envelope. It is still wheat or barley; remaining itself, it becomes more wheat, more barley, more itself. So those who said at the beginning, and who have said ever since, "How can this man give us his

* 1 Cor. 15: 36.

flesh to eat?" are the scoffers. The seekers after God ask a deeper question, the question of the disciples standing by the Christ before the multitude: "There are loaves here; but what are they among so many?" Is the incarnate life really extended? Will the Christ really feed mankind, not with their own hopes, but with himself? Does he indeed through the bread that we bring give himself to the hungering and thirsting multitude? What men ask of Christianity is not definition of the manner in which the Christ gives himself sacramentally, but certitude of the fact. What difficulty of explaining the manner in terms of chemistry and physics compares with the difficulty of explaining the historical fact that the Church spread over the world with water and bread and wine? But with a ministry of the Christ living and present must it not indeed conquer the world, going with equal certitude to the intellectual heights of Athens and the moral depths of Corinth?

The worship of God living and present expressed itself artistically in ceremonial, then in architecture, sculpture, painting. In literature it animated the highest of medieval romances, the story of the Holy Grail. That story kept its hold on imagination, spread over Europe, and has been told in various

forms down to our own day, because it answers those hearts for whom the real presence is a yearning as well as those for whom it is a faith. Historically the story is an allegory of the Eucharist, springing from the exaltation of the sacrament of the altar. For this is the animating source of the *holy* grail. That the original grail of folklore was not holy, but magic, probably not religious and almost certainly not Christian, makes the allegory only the more suggestive. Not what the story took, but what it made, is the evidence of its animating spirit, as many a saints' legend, to borrow a witty word, is "a baptized folk-tale". The Grail became the literary symbol of a great historical devotion. Where that devotion has died, or has never been born, the story remains remote or extravagant, or is reshaped into forms to which no skill in music, verse, or color can give life. It is vital only when the symbol is of reality. Else it has only that empty beauty which was all that the Athenians had kept from the elder conception of the maiden goddess "graven in stone" upon the Acropolis.

Such empty beauty, the symbol of a dead faith, is all that is left in the Christian sacraments themselves for modern Athenians. For them the sacraments are nothing more than expressions of our resolutions and aspirations. For them the incarnation is only

less antiquated than the Athena Parthenos. It means merely a vision of God's having given himself, not the fact of his giving himself now. Is not the presence of God subjective? Is it not my realization in philosophy, in sculpture, in poetry, in worship? Yes, says the apostle; for every human expression of God is divine to the extent that it expresses the universal human quest guided by God. It is an answer of the soul to God, an effort to "grope after him and find him". But, he goes on, we must not stop there, lest we worship our own images. Religion remains partial and tentative until it embraces not only the soul's answer to God, but also God's answer to the soul. What Edwin Abbey sought with his whole manhood gathered up into his last hour was not realization, but reality, not a sense of God, but God. The presence of God, says the apostle, is not our achievement; it is God's gift of himself; else God ceases to be God. We do not bring him down to us; he lifts us to him. It is not our realization of God, however clear the idea, however beautiful the imaginative conception; it is God come to us. That God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" means that he is greater than any human definition, conception, or rite; it does not mean that he remains diffused and remote. The apostle cries aloud in Areopagus that

he is not remote, that he has come, comes, and will come. His incarnation, the fulfilment of his love for men, the complete and perpetual giving to them of himself, is made present to "all men everywhere".

God is everywhere immanent, guiding the prehistoric flow of glaciers, the reflux of sap, the dim quests of savage worship groping after him. But that he is everywhere does not imply that he is nowhere in particular; else we who live in time and place could indeed never find Him. His response to us is in terms of our human life. That is the significance of those words, so strange in Athens: "defining the established seasons" of nations, "proclaims" repentance, "has set" a day, "the manhood in whom He defined" righteousness. The illimitable personality enters the limits of human personality, has made himself man for us, enters our bounds of time and place, is here and now according to his word. Answering all the honest ways of our seeking, he calls to his own ways of giving. Because he loves "he hath appointed".

Nomads of the old East sought after God in their ways and found him. God did not withdraw himself from their rudest seeking. But the love of God is more than responsive. He drew mankind to him through an appointed race, in appointed ways, until the kingdom of Israel should be reborn as the kingdom

of God. "Our fathers," says this apostle, "all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was the Christ." * Over against the unholy fires of perverted religion shone the Shekinah at the Jewish mercy-seat. The one worship had lost God in its own realizations of "gold and silver and stone graven by art and man's device"; the other had his real presence. In so far as they ministered in and through that presence, "salvation is of the Jews". The wider world was to be developed and empowered by their ministry to mankind of God with them. For God's love of mankind has always said not only "Do this", but "Go ye", has always appointed not only ways, but ministers. Through men he has given himself to men. The Church of God is fallible in every human member; but it is holy in his indwelling. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels"; but the treasure is not earthen. No failure of Levite or priest could impair the gift in his hands. Through the ways and the men of God's appointing men may enter into his presence and receive him. His presence is real with all the reality of human life and with all the deeper reality of his own. "For the reality that we see is

* 1 Cor. 10: 3.

limited by time; it is the unseen reality that is eternal." *

Nothing could be more different from that walking with the gods which we discern in Greek religion. "To the Greek, in so far as he was a Greek, religion was an aspiration to grow like the gods by invoking their companionship, rehearsing their story, feeling vicariously the glow of their splendid prerogatives, and placing them, in the form of beautiful and very human statues, constantly before his eyes." † Idols are embodiments of powers, greater than ourselves, which we call divine. They may be as crude as a painted stick or as glorious as the Athenian art beheld by the apostle; but so far the difference of idol from idol is merely in civilization, and should not obscure the fact that idols are still made and that they are essentially alike. The philosophic objection to the making of them is that it tends to blur clear thinking. The ethical objection is that they have uniformly become centers of unbalanced, and often of perverted, living. The religious objection finds the root of both tendencies in the fact that they divide and dissipate what should be unified. The horror of the Jew at idols was more than a philosophic objection to poly-

* 2 Cor. 4: 18.

† George Santayana, *Lucretius.*

theism; it sprang from his ancestral recollections of the worship of Astarte, from his experience that human life could be integrated only by worshiping one God, and from his conviction that the one true God has revealed and communicated himself.

So the Christian apostle, looking at the sculpture and remembering the literature of Athens, discerned the whole peril of idols in the light of the incarnation. Men must not embody God; for God has embodied man. They must not rest in symbols of the divine nature; for God has taken our human nature. They must not feed on fancies; they must feed on the Christ. Can Christianity give them less than the Christ without peril of erecting one more altar To God Unknown? If what I find is after all only myself, I must eat my own heart.

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